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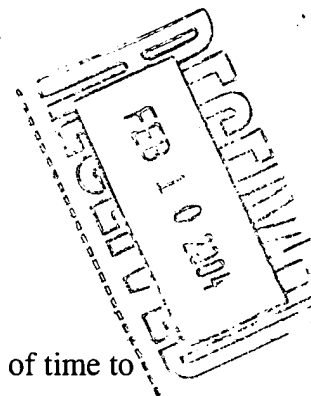
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

**APPLICANT:** Roberto Defez et al. **GROUP:** 1636  
**SERIAL NO:** 09/831,577 **EXAMINER:** D.A. Lambertson  
**FILED:** August 27, 2001  
**FOR:** METHOD TO CONTROL GENE EXPRESSION IN BACTERIA,  
NAMELY *RHIZOBIACEA*, TO IMPROVE ROOT NODULE  
DEVELOPMENT, NITROGEN FIXATION AND PLANT BIOMASS  
PRODUCTION

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

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PETITION AND FEE FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a), petition is made for a three (3) month extension of time to file a continuation application in response to the outstanding office action which was due October 29, 2003, the Response now being due January 29, 2004. Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$475.00 for the extension fee. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any further extension and/or fee that is required to Deposit Order Account 19-0079.

02/04/2004 MDAMTE1 00000064 09831577

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475.00 OP

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited on the date shown below in an envelope as "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" Mailing Label Number EV383544805US addressed to Mail Stop Patent Application, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Sarah Kennedy  
1/29/04  
Date